

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH PIERRE SALINGER

SEPTEMBER 7, 1962

1:00 PM EDT

FRIDAY

MR. SALINGER: The President is sending to the Congress a draft of a bill which would authorize him to order not more than 150,000 members of the Ready Reserve ---

Q. Is that upper case for 'ready'?

MR. SALINGER: Yes. -- to active duty for a period of not more than 12 months from the time the 87th Congress adjourns until February 28, 1963.

Q. To not later than?

MR. SALINGER: Not later than February 28, 1963.

Now, one of the provisions of this bill is that no member of the Ready Reserve who was involuntarily ordered to active duty under the Act of August 1, 1961, can be involuntarily ordered to active duty under this Act. Under this law also ---

Q. Under what law?

MR. SALINGER: Under this proposed law, the President may authorize the Secretary of Defense until February 28, 1963, to extend the enlistments, appointments, periods of active duty, periods of active duty for training, periods of obligated service or other military status in any component of an armed force or in the National Guard that expire before February 28, 1963, for a period of not more than 12 months. Those are the general provisions of the bill.

Q. When is that going up?

MR. SALINGER: Almost immediately.

Q. Will there be a Presidential statement?

MR. SALINGER: There will be no statement with it.

Q. Why is the President doing this?

Q. Where?

MR. SALINGER: I am not going to specify the area.

Q. In the August 1961 call-up, that was based or connected directly to Berlin, and so identified. Is this more than one area of crisis?

MR. SALINGER: Yes, I am just referring to the general international situation.

Q. Including Cuba?

MR. SALINGER: You can draw your own conclusion on that.

Q. Was this promulgated before the statement of the Republican leaders this morning?

MR. SALINGER: It was, and in fact this proposed bill was discussed with the leadership of both parties.

Q. It was discussed, you say, the other night?

MR. SALINGER: That is right, at the meeting the other night.

Q. What day was that?

MR. SALINGER: Tuesday, before we issued the statement on Cuba. The bill was finalized in a meeting the President had this morning with the Secretary of Defense.

Q. Was there anything emerged in the last 48 hours to add to the critical nature of this, any particular emergency that you fear is coming up?

MR. SALINGER: This is pegged to the general international situation.

Q. Who did you say attended today's meeting?

MR. SALINGER: The President and the Secretary of Defense.

Q. Anyone else?

MR. SALINGER: No, sir.

Q. In this extension of tours now in progress, how many of the Reservists called up last year are still in?

MR. SALINGER: I would have to refer you to the

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MR. SALINGER: Almost immediately.

Q. Will there be a Presidential statement?

MR. SALINGER: There will be no statement with it.

Q. Why is the President doing this?

MR. SALINGER: The President is asking for this power during the period that the Congress will not be in session and for a period approximately one month after Congress returns because of the critical nature ---

Q. It is a little more than that, almost two months.

MR. SALINGER: Excuse me, two months. Because of the critical nature of the international situation.

MR. SALINGER: Yes, I am just referring to the general international situation.

Q. Including Cuba?

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Q. Who did you say attended today's meeting?

MR. SALINGER: The President and the Secretary of Defense.

Q. Anyone else?

MR. SALINGER: No, sir.

Q. In this extension of tours now in progress, how many of the Reservists called up last year are still in?

MR. SALINGER: I would have to refer you to the Defense Department for that. I do not have the specific figure. I might call your attention to one item here, and that is that the bill calls for 150,000, whereas the August 1, 1961, bill called for 250,000. The reason for that is that we have upped the number of our regulars in the period since the August 1 resolution was passed.

Q. By how much, do you know?

MR. SALINGER: I think that is two divisions.

Q. Those two divisions aren't in yet.

MR. SALINGER: I think that they are.

Q. You have upped by two regular divisions?

MR. SALINGER: Yes.

Q. When you discussed this with the leadership, did you get a commitment from them on it?

MR. SALINGER: I don't know that.

Q. The Marines have also been increased at the same time?

MR. SALINGER: There have been increases in the regular forces since then.

Q. Pierre, you say this was discussed as a part of the Cuban thing the other night, is that right, with the leadership?

MR. SALINGER: This matter was taken up with the leadership the other night along with other matters.

Q. Pierre, inasmuch as the White House announcement on Tuesday related to Cuba, and this was a meeting with the leadership and this was taken up at that time, would it be right to infer that the Cuban situation ---

MR. SALINGER: I am not going to say anything more than what I have said.

Q. Well, it is a college try.

MR. SALINGER: I am sure I won't have to hold my breath in that connection.

Q. You said 150,000?

MR. SALINGER: And that is off the record.

Q. That is 150,000 members of the Ready Reserve, meaning all members of it?

Q. What is the Ready Reserve?

MR. SALINGER: The fellows who go down and train once a week and take two weeks during the summer and maintain their status.

Q. That is all Reservists?

MR. SALINGER: All services.

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Q. Since we last talked about it, is there any answer to Halleck and Dirksen?

MR. SALINGER: No, that appears to be a Congressional matter, and I am sure the committees will study it.

Q. Let me put it this way: The General Situation includes Berlin and Cuba, doesn't it?

MR. SALINGER: I think that you can draw your own conclusions.

plans? Q. Is the President going ahead with his travel

MR. SALINGER: Yes.

Q. Thank you.

END